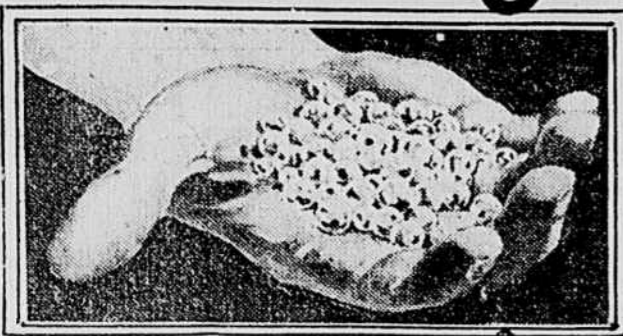


To Dredge Up Pearls by the Bushel from the Ocean Depths



\$1,000,000 Worth of Pearls of Good Size and Quality Would Make Such a Handful as This.

FOR three thousand years—and nobody knows how much longer—the world's supply of pearls has been gleaned from the ocean's bed by the same primitive method. A naked Oriental able to "hold his breath" for a minute and a half dives to the bottom, thirty or forty feet down—fifty feet at most—fills a small net bag with as many pearl-bearing oysters as he can grab in half a minute and returns to the surface with his catch.

In thirty centuries there has been no real improvement in this ancient and original method of gaining the most coveted of all jewels. Although representatives of the richest jewel markets of the world are always on the ground in the pearl fishery season, and in spite of the fact that all the important pearl oyster banks are under government protection and form a government monopoly, inventive genius has failed to supersede the naked native diver.

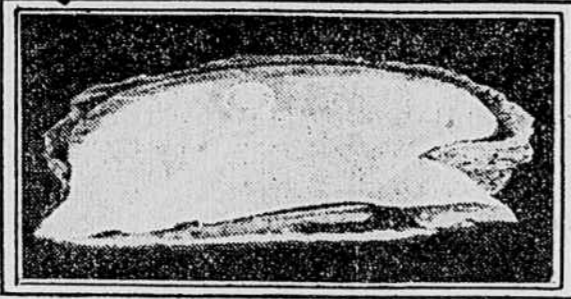
At the Australian pearl fisheries men equipped with the modern diving suits and helmets, into which air is pumped from the surface, are employed, but only where depths are too great to be negotiated by the naked Oriental, and even then with indifferent results. Efforts to make the diving bell useful in pearl fishing have not been profitable.

All of which adds to the interest of the announcement that American enterprise has devised a means of introducing machinery into the pearl fishing industry.

The statement is cabled from Paris—probably chief of the world's pearl markets—that Harry G. Thomas, of Portland, Me., has perfected an engine-driven dredging apparatus which is capable of raising large quantities of pearl oysters from depths which human divers are unable to reach. With this apparatus loaded on a sea-going steamer vessel, Mr. Thomas—so the dispatch says—is about to sail from Marseilles, France, to dredge for pearls in the Persian Gulf.

Mr. Thomas is a son of the late Major-General Henry G. Thomas. He is a celebrated traveler and collector of curiosities in all parts of the world. In the last thirteen years he is said to have dissipated a fortune in this way—with some assistance of the gambling games of Monte Carlo, where he has a villa.

From the accounts cabled from Paris it appears that Mr. Thomas's dredging apparatus is somewhat on the lines of the machine built in England for the purpose of recovering government treasure lost off one of the entrances to the Zuyder Zee when the British frigate *Lutine* was wrecked there in October, 1799. Besides dredges and grappling hooks the main feature of this apparatus is a long tube which is lowered over



A Large Pearl Photographed in the Shell of the Oyster, Where It Grew.

the side of the operating vessel to the bottom—thirty feet down—and through which sand and everything buried in it is drawn aboard by powerful suction pumps.

It is understood that Mr. Thomas's mechanism is capable of being operated while being guided about over a considerable area of the ocean's bed, even while the vessel from which it is operated is in motion. Its chief value, however—if it comes up to expectations—is its ability to reach greater depths than divers can attain. It is an axiom of pearl fishing that the greater the depth of the oyster's habitat the larger and finer the pearls.

As already mentioned, pearls hidden in their mother oyster at a depth greater than thirty or forty feet are seldom brought to the surface. Nobody knows how much of this sort of wealth, unattainable by any means, is in reach of Mr. Thomas's dredging machine. So long as he keeps away from the government-protected fisheries, the whole ocean bed—within the reach of his apparatus—is his personal pearl fishing ground. He claims, it is said, to be able to explore depths up to forty-five and fifty feet.

According to the authorities dealing with this subject, Mr. Thomas's apparatus is not likely to be adopted at the established pearl fisheries. Its operations probably are too drastic—likely to stir up and destroy whole colonies of oysters of all ages in valuable native beds, where they have been fostered and protected for centuries.

By the present methods of pearl fishing there is no danger of the profitable banks being destroyed. It is impossible not to leave sufficient oysters for breeding purposes. The native divers—who receive for their

labor one-third of their catch—take only the full-grown oysters, as only they are likely to contain pearls of value. Thus all the young oysters, amounting to quite a quarter of the stock, are left undisturbed.

These old-established and protected banks—for example, those of Ceylon, which have been fished for three thousand years—are especially rich in the best quality of pearls for a reason discovered by biologists. True pearls, contrary to the general idea, are not caused by the irritation set up by a grain of sand or any other foreign substance which finds its way into a tender part of the oyster's organism from which it cannot be ejected. They are the result of a disease, and the disease being contagious the less outside disturbance of the thickly populated beds the larger the number of the oysters that will be affected and

produce pearls. This is particularly true of the very ancient Ceylon beds, which are the world's chief producers of pure pearls. The disease mentioned is caused by a tiny parasite, a little worm, which attaches itself to the substance of the oyster, and becomes the nucleus of a pearl. The irritation it sets up causes the oyster to secrete an extra large amount of the same pearly fluid substance which coats the inside of its shell with the beautiful and valuable iridescent lining called "mother of pearl." And thus a pearl is born with the tiny parasite in its centre, and continues to grow larger and more valuable throughout the life of its oyster home, which is about seven years.

The oysters within which the little parasite referred to starts the growth of a true pearl are really not oysters at all, but a sort of mussel—not much unlike the pearl-producing fresh water mussels found in

many American rivers. In fact, these fresh water mussels yield pearls that are hardly inferior to those taken from the Oriental fisheries. One such sold in New York City not long ago for \$15,000.

Under strict government supervision the oysters as they are brought to the surface, after the divers have received their one-third share, are placed in guarded inclosures where merchants who have purchased them unopened from the Government in lots of 1,000 allow them to rot. This takes about a week. The decaying mass is then thoroughly sluiced with fresh water, the shell, stones and other debris are picked out and the residuum is spread on lengths of black calico to dry. During this process it is sifted for the small pearls.

The mass is finally sifted, the last time through meshes which will retain a pearl the size of a pin head. Nevertheless, for months after the fishing is over jungle men and women may be seen scouring the sand

Harry G. Thomas, Who Is Sailing for the Persian Gulf with a New Pearl-Dredging Outfit.



A Typical Scene at the Ceylon Pearl Fisheries, Showing Natives Under Guard Searching for Pearls in Rotted Masses of Oysters.



Pearl Oyster Fishing in Deep Water by Men in Diving Helmets—Native Naked Divers Are Preferred, but They Cannot Reach Depths Greater Than Forty Feet.

for little "seed pearls," multitudes of which escape the notice of the original searchers.

It is probable that Mr. Thomas, operating his dredge and suction apparatus from the deck of his ship,

will search his oysters as fast as they are caught, thus escaping the stench of rotting shellfish which makes life in pearl-fishing camps almost unendurable except to the unfastidious natives.

Some Very New and Curious Fashion Novelties to Be Seen in Paris

Paris, March 2.

IF the tailor-made is mannish, what shall be said of the latest extremes in cut and make-up. They look almost like stage costumes, but they are intended for street wear, and women who want to be smart do not hesitate to appear in them on the boulevards of Paris.



It has been suggested that the importation of dances like the Tango and the Grizzly Bear are more or less responsible for this inspiration of the designers.

And the colors! The woman who wears a dark yellow skirt and light yellow jacket does not hesitate to put on a tan leather belt and a sombrero, so that she looks as if she had just come from the Argentine plains—only no woman out there ever dressed like that. They can hardly be called either beautiful or graceful, for the colors are too glaring and the skirts are too straight and short to have any trace of grace—but a very beautiful woman who dares to wear a costume like this and carries it off is the envy of all her friends—as well as of her enemies.

Women have forgotten that the basic idea of the tailor-made was simplicity, and that they were emulating male attire by it. They have let their fancy fly, and now dare to add so many variations that it is as odd and airy as any other feminine costume. The designers have translated masculine dress into feminine terms, and in Paris you may now see feminine cowboys, hunters, sailors and students, with their big collars, broad shoulders, even neckerchiefs.

It is no longer a skirt and coat; the skirt short, and the coat a bolero, or long coat, according to the caprice of the wearer. The tall, majestic women are condemned to long tunics, in dark colors, with modest ornaments, it is true, but slender, petite, coy women, for whom the newer styles seem created, are doing all kinds of things. Their fancy is eccentric, but they are at the same time trying to correct nat-

ural defects. If they are too short they wear the bolero to make them appear taller, but the taller women, who do not want to appear gigantic, place the belt as low as possible. If the hips are too slight, the Persian tunic, with fur trimming, is called into requisition. If the bosom is too prominent, the large Oriental sleeves help to hide it. In fact, the tailor-made calls into requisition all styles, all ages and every color of the rainbow.

In sharp contrast with this intensified masculine tailor-made is the equally intensified fluffy-ruffle idea, now so prevalent. Women recognize that she is never so charming as when she appears less respectable, and so she selects fine tissues and gives her figure the appearance of lightness and joy. Frills and furbelows are the essentially feminine, and these are being employed for the drapery of the gowns, for the cuffs, even upon the hats. The skirt draped in tulle has an airiness and charm that appeals to the masculine eye, and while some women may indeed dress for each other, there are many who dress for the eye of man. They have gone from the extreme of plainness to this finest of drapery, and skirts, waists and sleeves are masses of fine folds of the gauziest material.

She hardly looks like the same woman who was on the street this



afternoon, for she has put off the severe and the outre, and is now all the more charming for her typically feminine attire. It is expensive, but what cares she? The effect is what she wants, and she gets it by this fairy costume, which takes her back to her childhood and makes her look ten years younger to her men admirers.

Silks and brocades are much in demand, and they fall in majestic folds upon tall, slender forms, adding to their dignity and beauty. Some, it is true, affects the "silhouette," wrapping themselves in black silk and wearing cloaks of white velvet, trimmed in fur.

Others are partial to lace—which has a great vogue, for it is found on afternoon gowns, evening gowns and even combined with fur.

Flounces, folds, overskirts, belts, everything is being used, and nothing is really unstylish. Woman is really a mass of bits to-day, for her dress may begin with a short skirt of mousseline de sole and continue with folds of silk, rising to a kind of jacket, in Louis XV. style, with a broad corsage, and short sleeves trimmed with chinchilla.

Or Madame may fancy a soft silk around her body, with two little overskirts of mousseline de sole trimmed with skunk, ending in a puff at the back. But no one mentions the puff for fear it may mean the return of the unsightly bustle.

Those transparent robes are in high favor, with their tunics of lace or embroidered tulle, and a rose un-

derskirt, or white, appearing half way down.

The corset is never in evidence any more, and the light tissues over the bust reveal almost as much as they cover.

As to hats—the forehead must now be shown, for the hats are small, tilted to the side, covering one temple and letting the roots of the hair appear on the uncovered side.

Every detail of the toilette of the stylish woman is exquisite—umbrella, bag, shoes—each one of these details rises to unheard-of prices, for a woman may carry an umbrella costing a hundred dollars and a bag worth five hundred, and shoes made to order may cost thirty dollars.

Extravagance runs riot, for the tailor-made is soon out of style, because it is so extreme, and these tulle and delicate fabrics last one or at most two wearings.

In evidences brilliant stripes, Roman stripes, the wearers prefer to call them which are smarter even than the fashionable plaids and more merciful to the woman who is unfashionable enough to retain a natural curve or two in her figure. The Roman stripes, usually of yellow, blue and red or green, are wrought in heavy silks and used in the main for trimmings. They give a smart touch to the severe turbans in use for early Spring wear. Worn in high bows at the back or side of the hat they add a fine touch of color to a costume and enliven the appearance of the wearer.

Stripes are also worn in street costumes. Black and white in the early wool and mixed silk and wool fabrics are the most popular combination. Made with a white waistcoat edged with black braid, and worn with a white and red picot edged hempen hat trimmed with black it is most effective.

